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Important Phone Numbers

Family Program Office
1-800-753-6201
ext 3493

Chaplain's Office
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Legal Office
269-969-3232

ID Cards/DEERS
269-969-3216

Finance
269-969-3224

TriCARE
1-877-363-6337

Security Forces
269-969-3300

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1-800-707-5784

On The Home Front

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Guard Family Action Plan delegates identified top well-being issues

Delegates from across the U.S. gathered in May for the Mid-level Guard Family Action Plan (GFAP). The GFAP is a grassroots process that identifies issues of concern to Guard members, spouses, parents, children, retirees, and civilian employees. Issues may concern any situation, requirement or event which affects the quality of life for Guard members, retirees, civilian employees or families. GFAP determines actions necessary to resolve issues and assigns responsibility for actions to the proper staff agency. The proper staff agency begins at the unit level within the chain of command and can include the Departments of the Army and Air Force and the Congress of the United States.

Delegates met in six groups (Force Support, Medical and Dental, Family Support, Entitlement 1, Entitlement 2, and Employment) to identify and present to the Guard leadership the most critical well-being issues facing the Guard today. After addressing many issues, delegates voted to choose the top seven issues. They are: Permanent Funding for Army National Guard (ARNG)/Air Guard (ANG) Marriage Enrichment Seminars; Combat Stress Reintegration Training; Inequities in the Reserve Component (RC) Retirement System; Funding for ANG Family Programs; Military Spouse Employment Protection; Time Restriction on RC Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) Chapters 1606/1607; and Funding Specifically for Guard Family Team Building (GFTB) Instructor Training Course and Advanced Instructor Training Course. For more information on the issues worked at this conference, visit: <http://www.gfap.org/>.

Michigan has recently identified members of our state team who will serve as our council for the Guard Family Action Plan. Issues that are submitted on the GFAP website or through the Family Program in Michigan will be addressed by the state council. The council determines if the issue can be resolved within our state or if the issue should be elevated to a National level to be addressed. Council members include volunteer family members from both the Army and Air Guard. Congratulations to one of our 110FW volunteers, Carey Wilson, for being selected as a council member!

Nationwide treasure hunt provides fabulous prizes

A new nationwide treasure hunt began on Memorial Day 2006, and will be in full swing through Labor Day — that's Tuesday, September 5, 2006. ThanksUSA, a 501(c)(3) organization, has created a unique national effort to thank the men and women of our armed forces and their families through a nationwide treasure hunt rooted in American history.

ThanksUSA offers two interconnected programs: The national treasure hunt and the military family scholarship program. The treasure hunt raises awareness, excitement and funds for the scholarship program in an educational, family-friendly way. And the scholarships are an invaluable way to "thank" our troops with the gift of education to their children and spouses.

The treasure hunt quizzes players on their knowledge of American history, culture, geography and trivia through 12 challenging puzzles, each relating to a U.S. State. Kids, parents, families, school classes and other groups, and individual people of all ages can

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Building a positive relationship with your spouse

Content Provided by Military OneSource

You've both got jobs to do, a household to run, and maybe even children to raise. So the time you spend alone together is limited. How can busy spouses, especially those dealing with a military lifestyle, build a sound, lasting relationship in such a high-speed, ever changing world? A loving relationship needs careful attention and constant nurturing. But it's easy to lose sight of that when you're racing through the day, trying to meet so many other demands.

Here are some suggestions to help you cultivate quality and endurance in your marriage, so that it will go the distance.

The heart of the matter

What makes you a great couple? It may begin with knowing yourselves and not trying to change each other. Loving, long-term partnerships aren't born. They grow from a rich feeding on acceptance, commitment, ritual, and empathy. Here are some strategies to help you strengthen your connection:

- **Adjust your expectations.** Accept yourself and your spouse as you are now. It's natural to want the "honeymoon phase" to last forever. But it doesn't. Over time, both you and your spouse will change, and the relationship itself will change as your lives become more complicated. For instance, after you start a family, you are transferred to a new installation, or experience your first extended separation due to deployment. You may find that you've lost some of the spontaneity that you once enjoyed, or perhaps your emotional needs have shifted because work takes more of your energy. If you accept that relationships evolve, you won't be disappointed when the honeymoon phase ends and life as a couple begins.
- **Date each other.** Spend time alone together to re-ignite the intimacy and romance in your relationship. It will help you remember what brought you together in the first place. It's important to "make" the time to be alone together, because you are unlikely, especially with the unique demands of a military lifestyle, just to "find" it. Once a week or once a month, schedule the kind of date you had when you were single or before you began your family. Agree not to discuss the children, the in-laws, or finances. Dress up and go out to dinner, see a movie, or spend a "quality" evening at home with the phone turned off. Take turns planning the activities you'll do together. If you want to sustain your passion and rapport, romance must be an ongoing part of your relationship - not something that's limited to birthdays and anniversaries.
- **Become friends.** It's not enough to love your spouse, and it's never too late to become true companions. For long-term happiness, couples need to genuinely like each other - to be both lovers and friends. Friendship develops from shared values and mutual empathy. Spend more time

having fun. Get involved in a "joint venture" that interests you both - gardening, making home improvements, or volunteering at church. Or take up a new hobby together, like dancing, jogging, or coaching your child's softball team.

- **Create rituals.** They're the cement that helps hold a relationship together. The rituals you create together become familiar shared pleasures you can look forward to when you're dealing with challenges at work or in the other parts of your lives. Rituals take many forms: a goodbye kiss before work, breakfast in bed with the crossword puzzle on weekends, or an annual holiday shopping trip together. Develop your own rituals for daily life and holidays. Then practice them. They will enrich your lives by providing stability - you'll have acts of beauty, joy, and tenderness whenever you're together.

Partnerships take maintenance

"Maintenance" might sound like something for your car, but in fact anything you value and that you want to last needs attention and care. And you want your relationship to stay solid and run smoothly for years to come. The biggest part of maintaining your relationship may be awareness - noticing how each of you feels, and acknowledging the things that need to change to keep things functioning well. Here are a few practical tips from the relationship maintenance manual:

- **Take the pulse of your relationship.** Just as you take stock of your career periodically, look carefully at your relationship from time to time and work toward making the changes you want and need. What makes each of you feel close as a couple? Is it physical affection? Relaxing together? Talking over coffee after the kids are in bed?
- **Discuss how you're feeling about the time you spend together.** Is it enough? Do you wish it were a higher priority for your spouse? Are you communicating clearly, honestly, and frequently about things that bother you? Or are you seething in silence about something that happened weeks, months, or maybe even years ago? Put all the issues on the table and begin making the compromises that will bring you into more harmony.
- **Make a habit of talking frequently.** Just a quick phone call from work to "touch base" can help remind you of the priority of your relationship and give you both a sense of continuity. Some people use a phone call during the day as a way to settle family business, so that when they do get home they are freer to simply enjoy each other's company. If deployed, be creative. As phone calls can be costly or simply not an option, use e-mail or write notes of love and support in advance. Make sure notes are sealed in separate envelopes to be opened on specified dates. This small gesture can play a major role in assuring your spouse that he or she is loved and appreciated.

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- **Plan in advance for getting around roadblocks.** It's helpful to "pre-discuss" situations that you already know cause friction between you. For example, you may have disagreements about who stays home from work when a child is sick or how you want to celebrate the holidays. Mapping out a game plan in advance will help you deal with such occasions when they arrive. Remember that compromise and teamwork are key. Ask yourselves, "What are the two of us going to do to solve this problem?"
- **Share household chores.** Research shows that women spend more time on household chores than men do. Working women can feel as if they have two jobs — the one they go to and the one they come home to each day. The result is often a mountain of resentment. Running the household together takes work on the part of both partners. Men may need to play a bigger role, and women may need to stop criticizing their partners for doing chores "the wrong way." (After all, there may be more than one way to scrub the sink or do the laundry.) Try rotating chores to minimize the boredom and drudgery factors. For example, suggest, "I'll cook if you'll clean up tonight."
- **Be flexible.** No matter how well you and your spouse talk about your differences, you won't agree on everything. And that's normal. In fact, your differences are probably part of what attracted you to each other in the first place. Recognize that not all differences of opinion have to be resolved. Sometimes you just need to agree to disagree — and be willing to listen to your spouse's point of view.
- **Give each other space.** Your relationship will be stronger and more interesting if you give your spouse time and space without you. Remember that one person can't possibly meet all your needs. Both you and your spouse must keep and nurture outside friendships and interests. Taking courses, developing new hobbies, and going off on short trips alone can be exciting and refreshing, too. Your spouse will come back revitalized, with a new perspective to share, and new ideas to discuss.

For more information on relationships, marriage, communication, resolving conflicts, or other resources for everyday life, please visit the website at www.militaryonesource.com.

Couples retreats now offered in our state

The Michigan National Guard Joint Forces Headquarters is hosting a Marriage Enrichment Weekend retreat for demobilized married soldiers/airmen and their spouses. (Airmen who have not been recently deployed may still be eligible to attend based on availability). The retreat is designed to assist couples by enhancing communication skills. Training is conducted using a blend of instruction and practical exercises.

Although this program is sponsored and presented by the Office of the State Chaplain, it is not a religious program. Nor is it a program for troubled marriages. It is a positive program designed to promote and improve positive communication in every marriage.

The next FY06 Strong Bonds' retreat is Friday-Sunday, 7-9 July at the McCamly Plaza Hotel in Battle Creek, Michigan. Retreats are scheduled in August and September in other cities in Michigan. Married couples may register to attend any retreat in any region, regardless of your home address. Please contact the Family Program Office at 969-3493 for more information.



Treasure hunt *from page 1*

participate in the treasure hunt by downloading the clue book at www.ThanksUSA.org. The treasure hunt is free, and open to any U.S. citizen who registers, however, children younger than 14 years old must obtain their parents' permission. A number of corporations and individuals have donated amazing prizes for the winners of each stage of the hunt, including: a trip for two to Los Angeles, California, a family vacation to Walt Disney World, a family home entertainment system, a trip for two to the pyramids in Egypt, a Harley-Davidson Motorcycle and two mountain bikes, a vacation to the 2007 Super Bowl, and more! Visit the web site for a complete list of prizes.

ThanksUSA is dedicated to providing scholarships for post-secondary education to the spouses and children of active-duty military personnel. ThanksUSA defines "Active-duty U.S. military personnel" as those who have served in active duty for at least 180 days since 9/11/01, including all those who have been killed or wounded in action. Members of the military reserves who have been activated to full-time duty and members of the National Guard who have been federalized and who otherwise meet the requirements are both eligible. Scholarships for 2006 were awarded in May, and potential applicants may register to be notified when the 2007 scholarship program begins.

Next Family Coffee in July

Join us on Sunday, July 9th at 2:00 pm for coffee, snacks, and conversation! All families are invited to join us for our informal get-together. You will find out about the latest news from the Family Program & upcoming events. We will have activities for children available. Please RSVP by Friday, July 7 by calling 969-3493.



New feature on the Military OneSource web site

Military OneSource is extremely pleased to announce that the transition to the redesigned Web site has gone smoothly and continues to be well received. The new design maintains all of the best aspects of the original Web site and offers some fantastic new innovative features. One of the new features on the redesigned Web site is a streaming video file providing the user with an orientation and overview of Military OneSource services. The orientation video provides a 3 minute information video clip on the benefits available through Military OneSource to include who is eligible, how to access and use the program, and what services are available. To access the Military OneSource Orientation, go to the home page at <http://militaryonesource.com>. Locate at left column, Search and Decision Tools, and select, More. You will be taken to the next screen. At the center page under the heading, Search and Decision Tools, select, Video Tips, and, Military OneSource Orientation. We encourage users to check out this new feature!

Free theme-park ticket program continues

A tribute program that has provided free admission to Anheuser-Busch theme parks to more than 1 million members of U.S. and coalition armed forces and their families will continue through 2006. Anheuser-Busch launched "Here's to the Heroes" in February 2005 to acknowledge the service of military men and women and the sacrifices made by their families, officials said. The program provides a single day's free admission to any one SeaWorld or Busch Gardens park, Sesame Place, Adventure Island or Water Country USA for the service member and as many as three of his or her direct dependents. All active, Guard or Reserve members are eligible. He or she need only register, either online at www.herosalute.com or in the entrance plaza of a participating park, and show a Defense Department photo ID.

Servicemember's Group Life Insurance (SGLI) premium increases

The new SGLI premium rate will increase the monthly premium rate for a member with maximum coverage of \$400,000 from \$27.00 to \$29.00. This premium includes an additional \$1.00 per month for Traumatic Injury Protection coverage (TSGLI), which is mandatory and added to any premium rate automatically. In addition the Family SGLI will be reduced. Servicemembers will see a change in the deduction from their pay for the first time in July 2006.

Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) is a program of low cost group life insurance for available to all members of the Uniformed Services. Servicemembers are automatically insured under SGLI for the maximum amount of \$400,000 unless an election is filed reducing the insurance by \$50,000 increments or canceling it entirely.

In addition, the SGLI coverage now includes Traumatic Injury Coverage, effective December 1, 2005. This coverage provides servicemembers protection against loss due to traumatic injuries and is designed to provide financial assistance to members so their loved ones can be with them during their recovery from their injuries. The coverage ranges from \$25,000 to \$100,000 depending on the nature of the injury.

The SGLI coverage may be converted, upon release from active duty, active duty for training, initial active duty for training or upon separation from the Ready Reserve, to VGLI or, if desired, to a commercial life insurance policy effective at the end of the 120-day SGLI extension period.

TRICARE Dental Program for Guard/Reserve

National Guard and Reserve members, with at least 12 months remaining on their service commitment, and their families are eligible for the TRICARE Dental Program. For more information, beneficiaries may access the TRICARE Dental Program online at <http://www.TRICAREdentalprogram.com>, or call toll-free 1-800-866-8499, 24 hours a day, Monday through Friday. Beneficiaries may also access the TRICARE Website at <http://www.tricare.osd.mil>, which displays the TRICARE Dental Program Fact Sheet as well as other dental related fact sheets.



We have moved!

The Family Program Office has relocated to a new space. The office is now in Room 106 of Building 6905. Same building, just different hallway. Stop in and visit!

Got some extra time?

*Maybe you can help us get organized!
Volunteers always needed - inquire within!*